

WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND

Strategic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2007

Members present: Paul Harden, Fred Pendlebury, Susan O'Donnell, Evaristo Amaral, Cynthia Farrell

Members absent: Betty Pleacher, John Iaderosa, Fred Ricci

Staff Present: Dottie Miller, Nick Ucci, Janice Lepizzera, Marsha McDowell

Guests: Helder Videira (SWIO)

Call to Order and Welcome to New Members:

With a quorum present, Chair Paul Harden called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM. He asked the new committee members to introduce themselves. These members included Susan O'Donnell, Evaristo Amaral, and Cynthia Farrell. Dottie Miller noted that the presence of these members were in-line with the Board's hope to integrate their individual industry expertise into the strategic development process.

Committee Meeting Minutes:

Chair Paul Harden asked the committee to review the minutes of the August 28, 2007 meeting. A motion was entered to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2007 meeting.

**VOTE: Paul Harden moved to approve, seconded by Fred Pendlebury.
All approved.**

Adult Training Program Update:

Dottie Miller explained the difficulties with implementing the On-the-Job Training program under the performance requirements of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). She stated that a newly-developed proposal by the state's two local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) – Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island (WPGRI) and Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston – would lead to more responsive and industry-driven training. The proposal, titled the Industry Skill Development Initiative, would align training efforts with the state's Industry Partnerships and high-growth segments of the economy, tie training to the direct needs of employers, and allow for industry to drive training. Dottie Miller stated that under the proposal, Industry Partnerships would develop, design, and help implement responsive training programs. She further outlined details of the proposal, including linkages to other workforce training-related programs and agencies; integration of netWORKri; establishment of industry “greenhouses” and “clearinghouses” to match clients with available job opportunities.

Chair Paul Harden made several suggestions for the proposal, including adding language to link and align these efforts with those of the Economic Development Corporation; identify pilot industries and specific workforce development partners; clarifying the language on

the establishment of industry greenhouses; note that the program structure and timeline would vary across industry partnership; and that these efforts could lead to higher-wage opportunities for Rhode Islanders. Chair Paul Harden then recommended a motion that the Strategic Development Committee support the Industry Skill Development Initiative concept with the aforementioned changes.

VOTE: Paul Harden moved to approve, seconded by Susan O'Donnell. All approved.

Dottie Miller continued her report and discussed the implementation of a Customized Training Program under the WIA. She stated that this program was intended for WIA federal funding to allow the LWIBs flexibility to respond to employers' labor force needs. She went on to explain that the model required an employer or a group of employers to identify a workforce needs, assist in the design of the training program and commit to hire successful graduates of the program. She went on to explain that the employer(s) would be very involved in the program, including the selection of candidates. She also noted that the employer(s) would commit to paying from 10 percent to 50 percent of the cost of training, adding that the model would allow an On The Job type of training format. She stated that both LWIBs would submit the design to the State Workforce Investment Officer for their review.

Nick Ucci provided an update on the state's Eligible Training Provider

List. He noted that as of the meeting date, eligible WIA clients could choose from 83 programs from 20 vendors, which was roughly 86 percent of the number of programs available by the end of Program Year 2006. Nick Ucci noted that efforts to increase the number of available training programs were ongoing and that the two LWIBs and the State Workforce Investment Office were working diligently to expand offerings, particularly with the Community College of Rhode Island. He also noted that of the 83 programs available, more than 59 percent had an estimated cost to the client in excess of the LWIB's Individual Training Account (ITA) cap of \$3,500. He stated that based upon conversations with netWORKri One-Stop Center staff, the high costs of training were a detriment for many clients even with the \$3,500 assistance. He suggested that the issue of raising the cap, in conjunction with the Providence/Cranston Local Board, be explored further prior to the end of the 2007 program year.

H1B Update:

Dottie Miller stated that she had been working with the Region One DOL/ETA Grant Officer regarding a possible extension of the Biotech Training Grant. She explained that the response from DOL/ETA had been very supportive and that they had indicated their interest in extending the grant period to allow the partners to continue to expend the funds. She stated that she would provide the committee with an update in January.

New Business:

Paul Harden asked the committee to consider how training would develop a workforce to meet the high-wage, high-demand occupations projected for industry sectors identified by the state.

Dottie Miller stated that she felt the initiatives discussed at this meeting were designed to meet that objective. She also reminded the members that they had been invited to serve on the Strategic Development Committee as representatives of the targeted industry sectors, and that their input on training and project development was very valuable to that objective.

Adjournment:

With no other business to be discussed, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE: Paul Harden moved to approve, seconded by Cynthia Farrell.
All approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

**Respectfully submitted,
Nick Ucci**